CLAIM(S):

1.   A method for managing an aircraft maintenance program for an aircraft operated by an operator, the method comprising:

> extracting maintenance tasks for the aircraft from at least one aircraft maintenance document, each maintenance task having a control point which specifies an interval at which the maintenance task is to be performed;
>
> sorting the maintenance tasks into initial maintenance task groups having common control points;
>
> guiding the airline operator to organize the maintenance tasks and initial maintenance task groups into a plurality of maintenance task groups; and
>
> guiding the airline operator in assigning user-specified control points for each of the plurality of maintenance task groups.

2.   The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one aircraft maintenance document comprises a Maintenance Review Board document.

3.   The method of claim 1 and further comprising:

> alerting the airline operator of any tasks having a control point less than the user-specified control point for the maintenance task group in which the task is grouped.

4.   The method of claim 1 and further comprising:

> tracking accumulated usage data of the aircraft;
>
> tracking task accomplishment data for each maintenance task;

determining a maintenance due point for each maintenance task, the maintenance due point being based upon the control point and the accomplishment data of the maintenance task;

identifying maintenance due tasks as those maintenance tasks for which a difference between the maintenance due point of the maintenance task and the accumulated usage data of the aircraft is less than a user-defined critical value; and

reporting maintenance due tasks.

5.   The method of claim 4 wherein the task accomplishment data includes a maintenance date on which the maintenance task was completed, as well as a number of flight hours and flight cycles accumulated on the aircraft by the maintenance date.

6.   The method of claim 1 wherein the method is operated over a communication medium operably connected to a plurality of input/output devices each having means for inputting and outputting information.

7.   The method of claim 7 wherein the communication medium is a digital communications network.

8.   A system for managing an aircraft maintenance program for an aircraft operated by an operator, the system comprising:

means for extracting maintenance tasks for the aircraft from at least one aircraft maintenance document, each maintenance task having a control point which specifies an interval at which the maintenance task is to be performed;

means for sorting the maintenance tasks into initial maintenance task groups having common control points; and

means for guiding the airline operator to organize the maintenance tasks and initial maintenance task groups into a plurality of maintenance task groups, each of the plurality of maintenance task groups having a user-assigned control point.

9.   The system of claim 8 wherein the at least one aircraft maintenance document comprises a Maintenance Review Board document.

10.   The system of claim 8 and further comprising:

means for alerting the airline operator of any tasks which have a control point less than the user-specified control point for the maintenance task group in which the task is grouped.

11.   The system of claim 8 and further comprising:

means for tracking accumulated usage data of the aircraft;

means for tracking task accomplishment data for each maintenance task;

means for determining a maintenance due point for each maintenance task, the maintenance due point being based upon the control point and the accomplishment data of the maintenance task;

means for identifying maintenance due tasks as those maintenance tasks for which a difference between the maintenance due point of the maintenance task and the accumulated usage

data of the aircraft is less than a user-defined critical value; and

means for reporting maintenance due tasks.

12.   The system of claim 8 wherein the task accomplishment data includes a maintenance date on which the maintenance task was completed, as well as a number of flight hours and flight cycles accumulated on the aircraft by the maintenance date.

13.   The system of claim 8 wherein the system is implemented over a communication medium operably connected to a plurality of input/output devices each having means for inputting and outputting information.

14.   The system of claim 13 wherein the communication medium is the digital communication network.

15.   A system for managing an aircraft maintenance program for a fleet of aircraft owned by an operator, the system comprising:

means for extracting maintenance tasks for each type of aircraft from at least one aircraft maintenance document, each maintenance task having a control point which specifies an interval at which the maintenance task is to be performed;

means for sorting, for each aircraft type, the maintenance tasks into initial maintenance task groups having common control points; and

means for guiding the airline operator to organize, for each aircraft type, the maintenance tasks and initial maintenance task groups into a plurality of maintenance task groups, each of

the plurality of maintenance task groups having a user-assigned control point.

16.　　　　The system of claim 15 wherein the at least one aircraft maintenance document comprises a Maintenance Review Board document.

17.　　　　The system of claim 15 and further comprising:

means for alerting the airline operator of any tasks which have a control point less than the user-specified control point for the maintenance task group in which the task is grouped.

18.　　　　The system of claim 15 and further comprising:

means for tracking accumulated usage data of the aircraft in the fleet of aircraft;

means for tracking task accomplishment data for each maintenance task;

means for determining a maintenance due point for each maintenance task, the maintenance due point being based upon the control point and the accomplishment data of the maintenance task;

means for identifying maintenance due tasks as those maintenance tasks for which a difference between the maintenance due point of the maintenance task and the accumulated usage data of the aircraft is less than a user-defined critical value; and

means for reporting maintenance due tasks.

19.   The system of claim 15 wherein the system is implemented over a
communication medium operably connected to a plurality of input/output devices
each having means for inputting and outputting information.

20.   The system of claim 19 wherein the communication medium is the
digital communication network.